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Testimony of Stephen O. Allaire
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in Opposition to

SB17, AA Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services
Section 32

I submit this memorandum in opposition to Section 32 of S.B. 17 which will eliminate all legislative committee review and approval of Medicaid waivers prior to submission to CMS.

The first objection is that it allows all state agencies, including DSS, to decide how to cut budgets without line-item review by the legislature. Not only does it relegate the legislative branch powerless to decide how its appropriations will be allocated, but it bars any public review of proposed cuts to the DSS budget. This will bar citizens and the legislature from an effective role in deciding how the tax dollars for the most needy in our state are to be apportioned and spent.

The second objection is that finding out about cuts to vital programs after they are made tilts the decision making process so far to the executive branch that great harm could come before bad decisions made without input could be rectified. Input from the legislature and the public that government programs serve, is vital to aid sound decision making, and to protect those in greatest need of Medicaid services. In the past, legislative review conducted pursuant to CGS 17 b-8 has prevented certain waiver programs harmful to the needy from being enacted.

In summary, elimination of the legislative review process under CGS 17 b-8 gives the unelected executive branch officials unchecked authority over the overall budget that is passed by the legislature, to the exclusion of input from citizens and their advocates who may be the most critically affected by the Medicaid Waiver programs.